

# Office of the Scientific Director: Summary Statement

by James R. Fouts

This is the first full year of operation of this office in the new reorganization of NIEHS. Much time has been devoted to: (1) recruiting leaders of new programs (Behavioral Toxicology, Pulmonary Function and Toxicology) or new leaders of existing programs (Biophysics, Pharmacokinetics); (2) developing plans for new programs and expansion of present programs between now and occupancy of the new building; (3) logistics of interim period between now and occupancy of the new building—especially fitting new programs and people into increasingly inadequate facilities; (4) maintaining liaison activities with other groups active in overlapping research areas at NIH and other governmental agencies; (5) developing plans for review of programs by the Board of Scientific Counselors; (6) developing plans for maintaining awareness of intramural programs, contract programs, energy-related research, extramural programs; (7) developing proposals for new NIEHS initiatives in mutagenesis testing and toxicology bioassay programs with NCI, and for support of centers in marine and aquatic biomedicine and further development of our intramural programs in this area here, in Maine and in Florida; and (8) development of plans to add more support to the Scientific Director's Office.

Accomplishments include the recruitment of Dr. Clifford L. Mitchell to head the Behavioral and Neurological Toxicology Laboratory and the subsequent staffing of that group with interdisciplinary expertise; the recruitment of Dr. Paul Nettesheim to be Chief of the new Laboratory of Pulmonary Function and Toxicology and the planning for the staffing of that unit over the next 2-3 years; the recruitment of Dr. Colin Chignell to be Chief of the Laboratory of Environmental Biophysics and the planning for establishment of a new program applying sophisticated biophysical techniques to studies of chemical effects, in addition to the present programs in the laboratory.

The Board of Scientific Counselors met twice during the year to review intramural programs. Two

of the larger laboratories presented their programs to the Counselors—Laboratory of Environmental Toxicology and Laboratory of Environmental Mutagenesis. The Counselors will be reviewing each of the intramural laboratories at least once every 3 years and sometimes more often. The Laboratory of Environmental Toxicology has now been reviewed twice since its establishment in 1972 (1974 and 1977). In the next year, the Laboratories of Pharmacology and Biometry will be reviewed. The practice of supplementing the Board of Scientific Counselors with *ad hoc* reviewers in research areas not represented by Board members will be continued as this results in in-depth reviews of all program areas most efficiently.

An NIEHS Science Seminar was held at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C., June 2-3, 1977. At this seminar, NIEHS scientists presented as complete a picture as they were able of the intramural research program—in the form of lectures and posters. Invitees included all other governmental agencies with research interests similar to, overlapping with, or tangential to ours; e.g., NIOSH-OSHA, EPA, NCTR, all other NIH's (especially NCI, NICHD, NIMH, NHLBI, NIAMDD), FDA, as well as some representatives of the press, public interest groups, and non-governmental research groups (e.g., our University Centers, local universities, and research institutes) to the limit of our attendance capacity (200). We hope that by such efforts, all who wish/need to know of our research program will have a chance to personally meet, talk with, and exchange ideas with our scientists who are actually doing this work. We propose to have such sessions in the future though the frequency is not yet set.

An intensive look at the recommendations made in the second task force report on Research Planning in Environmental Health Sciences was organized by the Scientific Director, the Director for the Research Resources Division, and the Director of Extramural Programs. An attempt was made to

consider each one of the recommendations in this report in terms of what NIEHS as a whole was now doing, wished to do but needed more resources for, would do but in somewhat different way or at a different level of priority, or would not be able or felt it unwise to do at present or in the near future. A Subcommittee of the National Advisory Council will be working with intramural and other NIEHS scientists and present a written report on NIEHS and the Task Force II document sometime in fall/winter 1977.

A process was begun to study how decisions are made within the Intramural and Research Resources programs and how to more effectively make major policy decisions and interact with other parts of the NIEHS. This is seen as a continuing process and one which, if even partly successful, will allow greater input to the decision-making processes by all scientists/program leaders at NIEHS and lead to more satisfying and rapid methods for settling differences and establishing effective interactions up, down, and across various administrative lines at NIEHS.

The Scientific Director meets regularly with other Scientific Directors at NIH in Bethesda to discuss various inter-institute matters such as appointment and promotion plans, policies and reviews, EEO and affirmative action plans, rules for

recombinant DNA research, Boards of Scientific Counselors' reviews of intramural research, travel plans and policies, contracts and monitoring, employment ceilings and grades, central research and research support facilities (libraries, computers, clinical pathology), clinical research activities, postdoctoral and visiting scientist plans, policies and review, personnel management and supervisory training efforts. These meetings are at least twice a month and assure that institutes do not develop procedures and policies at wide variance or threatening to the concept and practices of NIH as a whole. There is also a sharing of information about the research programs at other institutes and this helps in collaboration, avoidance of unnecessary duplication, etc.

The Scientific Director's Office was called upon to present descriptions of the intramural research program to a variety of visitors and to outside groups on a number of occasions, among these (1) a delegation of scientists from the People's Republic of China, (2) visitors from Yugoslavia seeking possible areas of mutual research interest, (3) visitors from Egypt meeting with Dr. Rall and Dr. Moore concerning the new U.S.-Egypt Environmental Health Sciences Agreement, (4) NIEHS Center Directors (extramural programs), and (5) NIEHS National Advisory Council.